

The Aerial Sprite and the Savage Monster: Rewriting Ariel and Caliban as Symbols of Latin America in Angra's Concept Album, *Aqua* (2010)

O espírito do ar e o monstro selvagem: reescrevendo Ariel e Caliban como símbolos da América Latina no álbum *Aqua* (2010), de Angra

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ABSTRACT: This paper investigates the adaptation of William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* into the album *Aqua* (2010), by the Brazilian band Angra. My article discusses the extent to which this is a successful adaptation, particularly in representing the dichotomy between Ariel and Caliban to Latin American audiences. I analyze how Angra challenges the typical postcolonial notion that Ariel and Caliban are opposites in musical terms. Moreover, this paper traces how the Biblical theme of redemption is central to both the play and the album.

KEYWORDS: postcolonialism; redemption; *Aqua*; *The Tempest*; Shakespeare.

RESUMO: Este artigo investiga a adaptação da peça *A Tempestade* para a música no álbum *Aqua* (2010), da banda brasileira Angra. Meu artigo discute até que ponto esta é uma adaptação bem-sucedida, especialmente em termos de representação da dicotomia entre Ariel e Caliban. Esse manuscrito analisa como a banda Angra desafia a típica noção pós-colonial de que Ariel e Caliban são opostos em termos musicais. Ainda, esse artigo traça como o tema bíblico da redenção está no centro da peça e do álbum.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: pós-colonialismo; redenção; *Aqua*; *A Tempestade*; Shakespeare.

Introduction

Since its debut performance in 1611, *The Tempest* has enchanted, bewildered, and captivated millions of people. Although *The Tempest* has had several cinematic adaptations — and famous ones, such as the 2010 release directed by Julie Taymor, in which Prospero is a woman —, Shakespeare has proven to be a constant

presence in the musical world. Such influence might be justified by the fact that, as Catherine M. Dunn (1969, p. 400) argues, “[in] *The Tempest* music is woven into the very fabric of the play. It contributes to the dramatic unity, to the setting and characterization, to the pageantry, and especially to the symbolism. In no other play does Shakespeare make it such a dominant element”. *The Tempest* has been adapted into symphonic poems and musical motifs by composers such as Pyotr Tchaikovsky and Jean Sibelius.¹

Shakespearean adaptations seem to thrive in the opera medium, since most of the greatest plays have already been transposed into operas by essential figures such as Giuseppe Verdi and Gioachino Rossini. Folk and popular music also draw inspiration from Shakespeare with singles, for example, “Ophelia” (2016) by the American group The Lumineers, and “Desolation Row” (1965) by Bob Dylan. Such diversified responses to Shakespeare’s supposed last play reflect its rich potential and self-proclaimed interest in music (Sanders, 2007, p. 42).

Among a plethora of revivals and adaptations, the concept album *Aqua* by the power metal Brazilian band Angra stands out. Released in 2010, the album attempts to condense the complexity of the five-act play into fifty minutes and ten songs. By “addressing specific characters, discourses, and situations” (Faria, 2016, p. 16), *Aqua* operates similarly to chapters in a book or the five acts in a Shakespearean play. It is worth noting that *Aqua* is not Angra’s first concept album, nor is the group the first to attempt to adapt a literary work into one. Among famous concept albums, Pink Floyd’s masterpieces *The Dark Side of the Moon* (1973) and *Animals* (1977) — which, in five songs, reimagines George Orwell’s allegorical novel *Animal Farm* (1945) — stand out.

This paper investigates the extent to which *Aqua* successfully transfers *The Tempest* into another medium while establishing a dialogue with postcolonial theories through the characterization of Prospero, Ariel, and Caliban. In addition, this paper discusses how, even though the Biblical theme of redemption seems subtle, it is the center of both *Aqua* and *The Tempest*.

How *Aqua* Translates Shakespeare into Music

According to Savannah Klein (2019, p. 2), “the concept album is a group of songs that manifests musical coherence and focuses on one main subject or storyline”. As such, it belongs more to the realm of literature rather than music, as it can also be perceived as functional poetry. Nonetheless, as an intermedial endeavor,

¹ *The Tempest, Symphonic Fantasia after Shakespeare* (1873) and *The Tempest* (1925), respectively.

Aqua is neither exactly a literary work nor a musical piece. The first intermedial challenge the album has to overcome is, therefore, length. Usually, *The Tempest* takes about two hours to be performed on stage; the album purportedly covers it in forty-nine minutes. That is accomplished by leaving behind some storylines or passages from the play, emphasizing specific intricacies of the Shakespearean text, and focusing on its striking characters: Prospero, Caliban, and Ariel.

Aqua is successful in its intermedial quest for, as Lindley (2006, p. 199) argues, “[f]rom beginning to end [*The Tempest*] is suffused with musical sounds and the effects of music are a continuous dramatic and thematic subject”. The play’s musicality — a shared characteristic with *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *Twelfth Night* — is a key factor for the adaptation. However, intermediality goes beyond the standard features of both album and play, for it is more concerned with the (aesthetically compelling) transformation, remediation, or hybridization of one form of media into another (Fischlin, 2014, p. 258).

I consider that to be perceived as a triumphant adaptive work, *Aqua* must be analyzed in terms of the extent to which its elements — the lyrics, the songs, and the illustrations — are intertwined with *The Tempest* and which aspects of the album establish a dialogue with other traditions. Considering the album’s title as a departure point, it is possible to argue that *Aqua*, water in Latin, reflects the play in which water serves as a symbol of purification and fluidity. Once *The Tempest* takes place on an island and the themes of redemption and mercy are explored, I affirm that these ideas are constantly interwoven with what I consider the play’s most striking feature: the ambivalence between tragic and comic endings.

The cover is the first piece of information the album conveys, offering a glimpse into its central themes. Faria claims that:

[the album cover] presents the monumental semblance of an old man, dividing the raging thunders of a tempest (shown in warm colors) at one side and the floating waters of the sea (shown in cold colors) at the other. Upon his forehead, the Greek letter omega (capital spelling Ω, the 24th and last letter of the alphabet) is shown surrounded by the wheel of the zodiac. The letter commonly bears the symbolic values of that which is final and great, arguably referring to the character Prospero’s resolutions, and connecting his image to Poseidon, Greek god of the sea, whose conventional depiction shows an old, bearded man. The zodiac symbols, inherited from ancient Greek astronomy, are often used not only in astrological theorizing but also convey mystical symbolism — which is related to Prospero’s portrayal as a sorcerer (Faria, 2016, p. 29).

Additionally, the distinction between fire and water, as well as sadness and anger, on the front cover hints at the album's mirroring of the play's ambivalence as it depicts the transformation of Prospero's wrath into forgiveness.

Although it is rather difficult to establish a connection between the album and the Shakespearean play at first, the presence of the likeness of an old male figure — either Poseidon or Prospero — and the scene of purification by a storm already suggest that the album, like the play, deals with fluctuation, uncertainty. The album's cover blends a thunderstorm and a sea storm, evoking the lines of the play in which Ariel retells his actions and matches them with the figures of Jupiter and Neptune:

I boarded the King's ship: now on the beak,
Now in the waist, the deck, in every cabin,
I flamed amazement: sometime I'd divide
And burn in many places; on the topmast,
The yards and bowsprit would I flame distinctly,
Then meet and join. Jove's lightnings, the precursors
O' th' dreadful thunderclaps, more momentary
And sight-outrunning were not.
The fire and cracks
Of sulphurous roaring the most mighty Neptune
Seem to besiege and make his bold waves tremble;
Yea, his dread trident shake (Shakespeare, 2015, p. 27)

Figure 1 — *Aqua's* front cover



Source: Faria (2016, p. 31).

Similarly, another theme of the play the cover displays is the divine or quasi-divine wrath of a powerful figure.² That is because the album, like the play, thrives in the ambivalence between tragic and comedic endings. It is noticeable that *The Tempest* has the potential to end in death, therefore resembling *King Lear* or *Romeo and Juliet*; or in a wedding, like *Midsummer Night's Dream*, when Ferdinand meets Miranda for the first time in 1.2.505 (Shakespeare, 2015, p. 43).³ It is precisely the connection between wrath and redemption that the album attempts to represent in its very first track.

"Viderunt Te Aquae", a pretty short song of less than one minute, quotes directly verse 16 from Psalm 77⁴ and likens Prospero's wrath and command of waters to the Biblical punishment of the Egyptians at the Red Sea.⁵ Conversely, the last track, "Ashes", amalgamates Prospero's monologue at the end of the play and symbolizes the character's willingness to forgive.⁶ That way, *Aqua* invites its audience to, like Prospero, embark on a journey from the tempestuous waters and moods to the restoration of order and calmness. Moreover, lines 17-18 from Psalm 77 refer to a lightning storm capable of causing significant destruction and providing atonement.

In contrast to the harmony and synchrony of the Latin choir, the introductory song is also marked by the seamen screaming and the noise of blasting thunder. Again, it is possible to perceive the ambivalence of *The Tempest* being transferred into another medium here. That way, not only does *Aqua* mimic the play's beginning in the middle of a storm, but also echoes epic poetry by promoting the impression that it, too, begins in *media res*.

² Compare the album's front cover to *The Tempest* 1.2.237-243 (Shakespeare, 2015, p. 27).

³ It is crucial to draw attention to the fact that Ferdinand and Miranda's first meeting occurs at the beginning of the play while their exchange of vows occurs in Act 3. Similarly, "Lease of Life", the ballad inspired by their love story, is the fourth song in *Aqua* and it is placed somewhere near the end of the first half of the album.

⁴ "The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled
The clouds poured out water: the skies sent out a sound: thine arrows also went abroad
The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven: the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook.
Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great water and thy footsteps are not known.
Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron" (Psalm 77:16-20).

⁵ Exodus 14:20-31.

⁶ "Our revels now are ended

We were actors?

We were spirits?

Melted into air

Now I lift my spell" ("Ashes")

Cf. "Now my charms are all o'erthrown

And what strength I have's mine own" (Shakespeare, 2015, p. 169).

The introductory song successfully alludes to the possibility of the play's first scene being the aftermath of the wrath of a powerful being.⁷ Given the band's trajectory and its tendency to create concept albums based on heroic quests, it is also possible to consider that *Aqua* mimes some elements of epic poetry⁸ and approximates Prospero to another quasi-divine figure, Achilles. The Greek hero's metamorphosis from wrath to compassion has been the subject of many songs and adaptations, as it is the main transformation in Homer's *Iliad*.

Another point in favor of *Aqua*'s evocation of poetry is that, according to Fernand Heinrich de Souza (2012), the album emulates the Shakespearean verse, as evidenced by the prevalence of iambic and trochaic syllables in the songs. Additionally, some songs, such as "A Monster in Her Eyes", present the prevalence of heroic lines (Souza, 2012, p. 29).⁹ Nonetheless, a discussion of *Aqua* and *The Tempest*'s musicality would not be complete without mentioning some other characters. For instance, in *The Tempest*, Antonio and Sebastian embody evil and disorder. Noticeably, they are characters insensible to Ariel's airs and the island's music. Similarly, in *Aqua*, there is no song from their perspective. That way, the album reinforces the Renaissance notion that some souls are so evil that they cannot recognize beauty in music (Lindley, 2006, p. 33).

A Post-Colonial Approach to *The Tempest* in the Light of *Aqua*

Once we discuss these ideas, it is crucial to investigate which characters are given a voice in *Aqua*. Since it would be inconceivable to create a song for each character, *Aqua* undertakes the task of representing three main characters: Ariel, Caliban, and Prospero.¹⁰ From the perspective of postcolonial studies, the representation of the relationship between Prospero, Caliban, and Ariel has been discussed extensively. As there is a tradition of rewriting these three characters and what they embody in postcolonial criticism, such concern is at the core of *Aqua*.

Similarly, at the center of the postcolonial response to Shakespeare's last play is the duality between Ariel and Caliban. Some authors consider them thesis and

⁷ The Exodus' scene establishes the album's theme: the rage of the waters.

⁸ *Holy Land* (1996) offers a solid ground to the perspective of postcolonial studies. The album depicts the European endeavor to conquer the Americas during the 15th and 16th centuries.

⁹ In Greek-Roman epic poetry, heroic lines are written in dactylic hexameter, whereas in English epic poetry, there is the prevalence of the iambic pentameter.

¹⁰ Ferdinand and Miranda's love story is also the subject of "Lease of Life".

antithesis, whereas others tend to elevate one at the expense of the other. Such a dichotomy might be explained by the prevalence of the humor theory proposed by the Greek physician Hippocrates (460 BCE – 375 BCE) in Shakespeare’s craft. Since it was a well-established medicine practice and theory at the time, it is possible to find evidence that Shakespearean characters obey the constitution of their elements and are ruled by the humor associated with each element. For instance, Ariel is a being made of air and occupies the sky, while Caliban is a fruit of the island. As a consequence, it has been noted that Caliban’s language is way too melancholic, whereas Ariel’s reeks of immaturity and light-heartedness, a feature of sanguine humor in Renaissance medicine.¹¹

Despite these differences, it is clear that postcolonial theory places Prospero as the colonizer and, while there is a strong school of thought that suggests Caliban is the true embodiment of the former British colonies in Africa, the case is not quite as unambiguous when we consider the play’s reception under the light of postcolonial studies in Latin America.¹²

To exemplify that, Uruguayan poet and essayist José Enrique Rodó published in his essay “Ariel” (1914) his claims that

Ariel, genius of the Air, represents, in the symbolism of Shakespeare, the noble part — the spirit with wings. For Ariel embodies the mastery of reason and of sentiment over the baser impulses of unreason. He is the generous zeal, the lofty and disinterested motive in action, the spirituality of civilization, and the vivacity and grace of the intelligence; — the ideal end to which human selection aspires; that superman in whom has disappeared, under the persistent chisel of life, the last stubborn trace of the Caliban as a symbol of sensuality and stupidity (Stimson, 1922, p. 4, translated by Stimson).¹³

Decades later, Rodó’s notion is to be challenged by Cuban writer Roberto Fernández Retamar.

¹¹ Compare *The Tempest* 3.2.148-156 (Shakespeare, 2015, p. 107) to 1.2.224-228 (Shakespeare, 2015, p. 25). See Raffel (2006, p. xviii-xxv). For more on Shakespearean humors, refer to National Library of Medicine (c2026).

¹² Conversely, in “Caliban in the Third World: Shakespeare’s Savage as Sociopolitical Symbol”, Alden T. Vaughan (1988, p. 291) argues that “Caliban’s sociopolitical career has been longer and more diverse in Latin America than in Africa”.

¹³ In the original, in Spanish: “Ariel, genio del aire, representa, en el simbolismo de la obra de Shakespeare, la parte noble y alada del espíritu. Ariel es el imperio de la razón y el sentimiento sobre los bajos estímulos de la irracionalidad; es el entusiasmo generoso, el móvil alto y desinteresado en la acción, la espiritualidad de la cultura, la vivacidad y la gracia de la inteligencia, el término ideal a que asciende la selección humana, rectificando en el hombre superior los tenaces vestigios de Calibán, símbolo de sensualidad y de torpeza, con el cincel perseverante de la vida” (Rodó, 1914, p. 15).

In *Caliban and Other Essays* (1989), Retamar argues that reclaiming Caliban as the true representative of Latin American culture is necessary in response to the neoimperialism promoted by the United States. Elizabeth Millán-Zairbert (2007, p. 150) notes that, “[a]t the outset, it might strike one as odd that two Latin American authors, who are concerned with the problem of Latin American cultural identity, would use symbols from an English play to guide their investigation of Latin American cultural identity”. Notwithstanding, in “Latin America Identity: Ariel or Caliban”, George Frederico Oliveira Bentley (2010, p. 21) argues that what is at stake is Latin America’s potential to see herself neither as a mirror to Europe nor as an imitator of the US.

In other words, just like Ariel and Caliban must reclaim their identity, so must Latin America. Angra’s choice to adapt *The Tempest*, rather than any other Shakespearean play, might reflect the fact that, as Mowat (2015, p.195) states, people from Africa, Latin America, and India, for good or ill, consider Shakespeare’s farewell to theater as a mirror to their own past. However, what some postcolonial theorists may have overlooked is the extent to which both Ariel and Caliban remain submissive to Prospero’s will. Postcolonial criticism has to some extent portrayed them as opposing forces: Ariel as a reinforcement of the colonizer’s presence, whereas Caliban is seen as a hero to the colonized people. Angra’s *Aqua* redefines that commonplace perspective, which tends to antagonize Ariel and elevate Caliban, by musically dramatizing the imprisonment both characters undergo.

As Fischlin (2014, p. 263) argues, “music may be more closely tied to social and community functions that strengthen structures of identity, history, memory, storytelling and community affiliation”. *Aqua*, thus, explores *The Tempest* from the perspective of people who have not only struggled with serfdom and enslavement but are also in search of redemption from their past. Such a Herculean task is depicted in three songs, “Spirit of the Air”, “Hollow”, and “A Monster in Her Eyes”.

In light of this, I analyze below the songs “Spirit of the Air” and “A Monster in Her Eyes”, which aim at giving voice to Ariel and Caliban. In my analysis, I examine the extent to which both songs in *Aqua* endorse or criticize the postcolonial interpretations of each character based on their Shakespearean depictions: Ariel as a magical, ethereal being, perhaps too willing to serve Prospero, and Caliban as a savage monster, oppressed by the magician. Moreover, I investigate how both songs interpret the theme of redemption.

It is noticeable that both tracks are played almost sequentially. “Spirit of the Air” is track number 6, whereas “A Monster in Her Eyes” is number 8. They are

separated by “Hollow”, which can be interpreted as a way to embody the island in a song composition. The three tracks stake a claim on the extent to which Prospero overpowers and becomes the master of Ariel, Caliban, and the island itself. Moreover, it is noticeable that these tracks appear in the same order in which we are presented with these characters in the play.¹⁴ Contrary to postcolonial theories and revivals of *The Tempest*, race is not an issue on the album, albeit it may be to theoreticians. In that way, the album challenges conventional notions of representation, which insist on highlighting the problem and how it might affect Ariel and Caliban’s relationship to each other and to Prospero. The album suggests that Ariel and Caliban are Prospero’s servants and that both demand freedom; that is, they are more similar than postcolonial authors such as Retamar tend to claim.

Angra’s *Aqua* is built upon the theme of redemption, which, if explored through *The Tempest*, might offer a wealth of interpretations. For example, in the Biblical narrative, God redeems the Israelites from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 1-15). In this religious context, redemption is embedded with a strict economic language; that is, to redeem someone is to repossess them, claim ownership, or free someone from slavery or a debt. In the Bible, the redeemer (*Go’el*, in Hebrew) occupies a central role in the narrative.¹⁵ It is noticeable that not only does Prospero resemble such powerful characters, but also is a figure who demands unquestionable obedience. He is the one who holds the power to enslave (the elements, the island’s inhabitants) and/or to set them free, as he is the father to a daughter whom he loves and controls.¹⁶

What is clear to the reader — both of the Bible and of the Shakespearean text — is that not only does redemption entail a transfer of ownership but also a status elevation.¹⁷ For decades, postcolonial studies have shed light on *The Tempest*, allowing us to affirm that, although Ariel and Caliban might seem alien to Latin Americans, their journeys from enslavement to repossession might illuminate the continent’s search for cultural identity.

Both “Spirit of the Air” and “A Monster in Her Eyes” share the common motif of freedom, highlighting how the colonized had to come to terms with being perceived by colonizers as either exotic, magical creatures or monsters. In terms of

¹⁴ Ariel’s first entrance: 1.2.224 (Shakespeare, 2015, p. 25). Caliban’s first entrance: 1.2.385 (Shakespeare, 2015, p. 35).

¹⁵ Moses, Boaz, and Christ are figures that illustrate this concept.

¹⁶ Consider other father-daughter relations in Shakespeare’s canon. Fathers control their daughters and offer an impediment to love’s redemption: the results can be disastrous — Desdemona and Juliet — or miraculous — Hermia.

¹⁷ Consider Joseph’s story in *Genesis*, the Exodus narrative and Ruth.

representing how similar the circumstances of Ariel and Caliban are in a different medium, Faria (2016, p. 49) notes that both songs “start with soft acoustic guitar arrangements accompanied by the violin, and shift towards a powerful heavy metal approach”. It can be argued that such a change in mood and instrumentalization suggests the inner feeling of revolt that slowly builds inside each character.

The songs also share a choir. In “Spirit of the Air”, the choir follows lines 26-27: “You’ve been my Lord for so long / Now comes the time to regain...”, whereas in “A Monster in Her Eyes”, it sings the lines 29 and 30: “My sacrifice / My paradise”. It has been suggested that the choir in both songs may represent the island population under Prospero (Faria, 2016, p. 49). In light of this interpretation, I further develop the argument and claim that the choirs represent the antagonistic traditions in former colonies where they perceive Ariel and Caliban as either descendants of a complicit intellectual elite or a rebellious, repressed native population.

In terms of characterization, “Spirit of the Air” aims to resemble a genderless, ethereal being, whereas “A Monster in Her Eyes” emphasizes the dual nature of Caliban, considered half-beast, half-man: “I always was a lower being/ Not much, I’m just a beast”. Nevertheless, both songs accentuate how Prospero’s takeover took different forms: while Ariel is persuaded to obey Prospero, Caliban is forced to do so. “Spirit of the Air” evokes *The Tempest* passage 4.1.48-52¹⁸ in the second verse: “[b]efore you can say: ‘Spirit! Come and go!/ My Lord/ I’ll bring the tempest, I won’t even question:/ I’ll be gone in a trip of a toe?”. On the other hand, in “A Monster in Her Eyes”, Caliban asserts there’s more than one way to deny someone’s freedom, and one of them is through language.

According to Barbara A. Mowat,

Shakespeare places Caliban in relation to Prospero [...], to Miranda [...] and indirectly to Ferdinand [...]. Thus, for many readers, Shakespeare creates in the center of this otherworldly play a confrontation that speaks eloquently to readers and audiences living the aftereffects of the massive colonizing of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and observing the continuing life of empire in the interactions between the powerful and the former colonized states (Mowat, 2015, p. 196).

¹⁸ “Before you can say ‘Come,’ and ‘Go,’
And breathe twice, and cry ‘So, so,’
into another medium Each one, tripping on his toe,
Will be here with mop and mow.
Do you love me, master? No?”
The Tempest 4.1.48-52 (Shakespeare, 2015, p. 123).

This trio, Prospero, Caliban, and Miranda, also appears in “A Monster in Her Eyes”, as it may be rather challenging to determine to whom Caliban sings his lament.

To some extent, Caliban’s claim: “[y]ou took my freedom/And shaped it into your servant/You taught me your tongue/Denying me the word”¹⁹ acknowledges the “bitter moral victory” that Stephen Greenblatt (2015, p. 35) alludes to in *Learning to Curse: Aspects of Linguistic Colonialism in the Sixteenth Century*. “A Monster in Her Eyes” is considered a metal ballad, which renders it, just like Caliban, a sort of hybrid identity in the musical setting. Not only is “A Monster in Her Eyes” one of the most beautiful songs in *Aqua*, but it is also the one that directly challenges the Milanese’s depiction of Caliban as a monster and “this thing of darkness” (Shakespeare, 2015, p. 165).²⁰

Thus, the song translates the need for redemption into another medium: Caliban wishes to be redeemed from such a notion, especially by Miranda. Angra successfully adapts Caliban’s lyrical and poetic language (Mowat, 2015, p. 196; Raffel, 2006, p. xix) through the instruments and vocalization in “A Monster in Her Eyes”. The blend between pain and outrage in the singer’s performance and instrumentalization reflects Caliban’s bitterness. In the end, Caliban concludes he should no longer perceive himself as a monster; instead, he is the legitimate owner of the land which he inhabits.

While “Spirit of the Air” maintains the reverential relation between Prospero and Ariel displayed in *The Tempest*, “A Monster in Her Eyes” can be interpreted almost as a romantic ballad, where a rejected Caliban sings his unrequited love for Miranda. Moreover, as Faria (2016, p. 77) notes, “[t]he restoration of the image Miranda has of him appears here to be analogous, in terms of importance, with the reclaiming of the island”. In addition, the song reflects Caliban’s desires and dreams of populating the island alongside Prospero’s daughter, in an almost Edenic perspective.²¹

In light of acknowledging the connection between *Aqua* and the Biblical motif of redemption, Caliban’s desire to reclaim his paradise is successfully transformed into a song on the album in “A Monster in Her Eyes”. Although the song displays a rather romanticized version of Caliban’s relationship with Miranda,²²

¹⁹ *The Tempest* 1.2.437-439 (Shakespeare, 2015, p. 39).

²⁰ *The Tempest* 5.1.330-331.

²¹ Cf. *Genesis*. 1.16 to *The Tempest* 1.2.400-403 (Shakespeare, 2015, p. 37).

²² “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them,

it symbolizes his yearning for redemption as it contests Caliban's depiction throughout the entire play.

The very first mention of Caliban in *The Tempest* is in Act 1, where Prospero declares that Sycorax's child scarcely bears human shape.²³ Shakespearean studies acknowledge the importance Michael de Montaigne's essay "Of Cannibals" (1580) had in Shakespeare's imagination in *The Tempest*. After all, Renaissance Europe was on the verge of the Age of Exploration and speculation regarding the inhabitants of distant 'Edens' was flourishing. Such a representation of Early Modern Age powers of imagination finds voice in Trinculo, who, in Act 2, compares Caliban, upon their first meeting, to a fish.²⁴ The next human to have a glimpse of Caliban is Stephano. Again, the notion of Caliban as a half-human creature is stressed.²⁵

As Faria argues (2016, p. 47), "[A Monster in Her Eyes] aims at highlighting the humanity of the beast-like character in order to explore and resonate some of his endeavors in *The Tempest*". Taking into consideration the redemption motif that, in my analysis, reverberates throughout the album — and, to some extent, throughout the play —, Caliban's portrayal by the band is also an attempt to redeem him, to restore him, as any colonized subject, to his status as a human being.

Finally, another feature the song exhibits is the idea that looking at something or being looked upon by someone is an inherently political act. In *The Tempest*, Miranda claims that Caliban is "villain, sir, I do not love to look on" (Shakespeare, 2015, p. 35).²⁶ It is precisely upon this duality that the song's chorus is built. The song alludes to Caliban's defiance of Prospero in Act 1²⁷ and invites the audience to question who the real monster really is, Caliban or the man who shaped Caliban into the creature he has become.

From a musical and literary standpoint, it is possible to affirm that the chorus is the most essential section of a song, as its repetition and melodic stability often concentrate the song's emotional and semantic essence — a point supported by both Philip Tagg's (1982, p. 45) semiotic model of popular music and Roman

and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (*Genesis* 1:27-28).

²³ "Save for the son that [Sycorax] did litter here,/ A freckled whelp, hag-born not honored with/ A human shape" (*The Tempest*, 1.2.335-337. Shakespeare, 2015, p. 33).

²⁴ "What have we here? a man or a fish? dead or alive? A fish: he smells like a fish; a very ancient and fishlike smell; a kind of not of the newest poor-John" (Shakespeare, 2015, p. 77).

²⁵ *The Tempest* 2.2.58-72 (Shakespeare, 2015, p. 81).

²⁶ *The Tempest* 1.2.370-71 (Shakespeare, 2015, p. 35).

²⁷ *The Tempest* 1.2.396-411 (Shakespeare, 2015, p. 37).

Jakobson’s (1960, p. 356) notion of the poetic function of language, in which repetition reinforces meaning and affect.

As I have argued, “Spirit of the Air” and “A Monster in Her Eyes” partake of similar structural devices. Both songs are almost the same length, “[both] refer to a substantial amount of textual content from *The Tempest*, and both songs, by means of point of view, address the issue of master versus servant, or colonizer versus colonized” (Faria, 2016, p. 48). Not only do the choruses intertwine Ariel’s and Caliban’s depictions by stating their sense of selfhood is incomplete and subordinated to the eyes of their colonizers (Prospero and Miranda), but they also state more emphatically their longing to reclaim and repossess their freedom and status.

Table 1 compares “Spirits of the Air” and “A Monster in Her Eyes” choruses. By highlighting their desire for independence, *Aqua* triumphantly reimagines *The Tempest*, challenging the postcolonial criticism legacy, which insists on viewing Ariel and Caliban as distinct classes of subordinates in a new medium.

Table 1 – “Spirit of the Air” and “A Monster in Her Eyes” choruses

| “Spirit of the Air” | “A Monster in Her Eyes” |
|---|--|
| Groves and standing lakes (<i>And standing lakes</i>) | My land and Miranda will see |
| Island of dreams where you reside (<i>where you reside</i>) | All my sacrifice (<i>my sacrifice</i>) will be worth the price |
| Spirit of the air | Forever I’ll say |
| You throw (<i>you throw</i>) your tricks and spells (<i>Your tricks and spells</i>) | My stolen paradise (<i>My stolen paradise</i>) |
| And claim for your freedom (<i>freedom</i>) once denied | It will be worth the price and no longer |
| It’s no good to watch the skies | I’ll be a monster in her eyes |
| Through someone else’s eyes | I’ll be a monster in her eyes |
| Through someone else’s eyes | I’m just a monster in her eyes |

Source: elaborated by the author.

Table 1 compares the two songs, focusing on Ariel’s and Caliban’s relationship with the island and the emphasis on the act of seeing and being seen, as highlighted in the choruses. Whereas “Spirit of the Air” gives prominence to the oneiric aspects of the island, thereby aligning with Ariel’s depiction in Shakespeare, “A Monster in Her Eyes” emphasizes the Edenic world from which Caliban was stolen by Prospero. Thus, the choruses bring Caliban and Ariel closer together, characters who postcolonial criticism traditionally positions as antagonists. Through their musical structures, the songs highlight the similarities between the two characters; likewise, through the lyrics, not only does *Aqua* establish a dialogue with *The Tempest*, but

also brings to the foreground the theme of redemption through both actual and symbolic freedom, particularly in terms of the construction of one's self-image.

Conclusion

Redemption is a concept that intertwines a significant part of the Biblical narrative.²⁸ Not only is it possible to argue that “Shakespeare alludes to the *Psalms* more often than to any other biblical book” (Hamlin, 2018, p. 17), but also that, like the Bible, his plays are charged with the redemption theme. *The Tempest* concludes with a series of transferences of ownership and characters' redemption through the power of music. All of those who are somehow affected by the sweet airs of the island are redeemed. For example, by the end of the play, Prospero has had his dukedom restored, and Ariel is finally free. Prospero also restores Caliban and has the island returned to him. Conversely, by denying a song to either Antonio or Sebastian (both immune to either the island's or Ariel's music), the album states that there is no redemption for them.

In conclusion, *Aqua* recognizes the healing powers of music and the restoration of order from chaos in its ten songs. Like the Flood narrative, which opens it and can be compared to Prospero's wrath at the play's beginning, the waters come to wash away the corruption and deliver a new, pure, and orderly world. This is particularly evident in both the first track, “Viderunt Te Aquae”, and the last one, “Ashes”, which draws from Prospero's epilogue at the end of the play.

Rafael Bittencourt, Angra's guitarist, explains that “Viderunt Te Aquae”

[is] a clichéd harmony that can be found in pieces for games or movies soundtrack. Technically, it's a minor chord melody with a diminished fifth. Simple, but it sounds incredible to me and my partners. To develop it and make it unique, I created an arrangement for five voices in counterpoint. The Bible inspired Shakespeare way too much. I re-read some passages. The lyrics are from Psalm 77 in the Vulgate. It is one of the psalms dedicated to the ancient Hebrew masters. ‘Viderunt te Aquae’ means something like ‘the waters turned you over’ and it is about a man who loses his faith, but then regains it. In Psalm 77, the waters represent the transformations in this man's monologues and his inner change. Just like the main character, Prospero [in *The Tempest*] (Bittencourt, 2010, own translation).²⁹

²⁸ In *The Drama of Scripture* (2006), Craig Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen argue that the Bible can be read as a single narrative embroidered with the redemption theme.

²⁹ In the original, in Portuguese: “É uma harmonia clichê que pode ser encontrada em trilhas sonoras de filme. Tecnicamente é uma melodia de acorde menor com a quinta diminuta. Simples, mas soa muito bem para mim e meus parceiros. Para desenvolvê-la e torná-

In my analysis, the album intertwines the Biblical theme of redemption with Prospero's wrath and, thus, symbolizes the character's transformation.

Northrop Frye argues in *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature*,

the theme of redemption out of water follows in the sequence that includes the story of Noah's ark, the crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites, the symbolism of baptism in which the person baptized is separated into a mortal part that symbolically drowns and an immortal part that escapes, and such occasional uses of the image as the cry to God from the depths of the waters in Psalm 69 (Frye, 1982, p. 192).

In *Aqua*, the same waters that weave all these biblical narratives cleanse Prospero's wrath and — like the Flood marked a new beginning to the formerly enslaved Israelites — redeem Ariel and Caliban. Whereas Ariel, as a being of air, needs to reclaim the skies (“[i]t's no good to watch the skies/Through someone else's eyes”, “Spirit of the Air”) (Angra, 2010), Caliban, fruit of the island, needs to reclaim the land and the possibility of writing a new future to come as the ruler of his stolen paradise.

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-la única, fiz um arranjo para cinco vozes em contraponto. A Bíblia inspirou muito Shakespeare e eu reli alguns trechos. As palavras são do salmo 77 da Bíblia em latim. É um dos salmos dedicados aos mestres do povo ancião hebreu. 'Viderunt te Aequae' significa algo como 'ás águas te viram' e é sobre um homem que perde sua fé, mas depois a retoma" (Bittencourt, 2010).

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